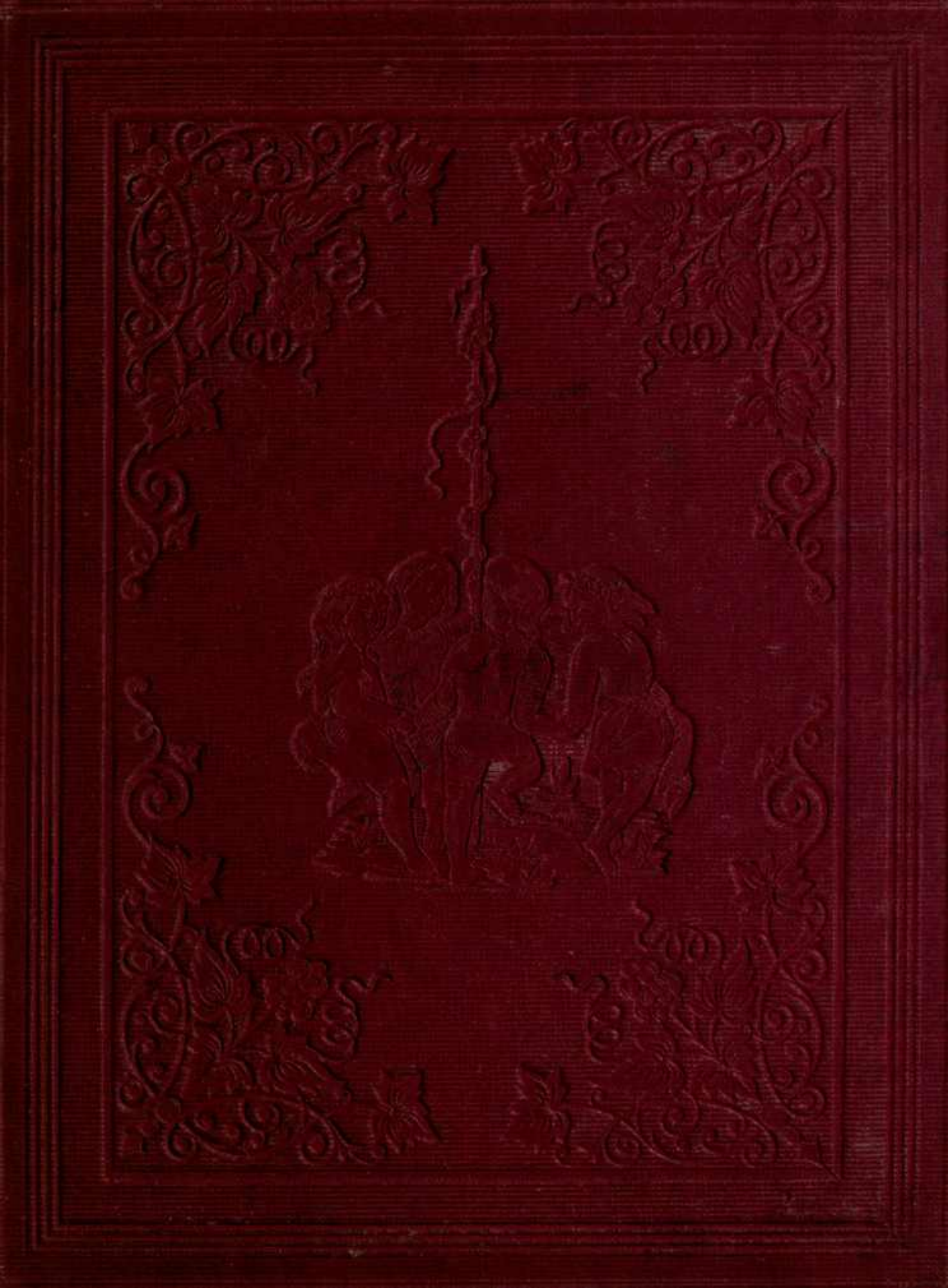

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CHILDREN'S BOOK
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LOS ANGELES

Minnie Brown.

MINNIE BROWN;

OR,

THE GENTLE GIRL.

BY

FRANCIS FORRESTER, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF "ARTHUR ELLERSLIE," "REDBROOK," ETC.

BOSTON:

GEO. C. RAND, 3 CORNHILL.

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MINNIE BROWN.

MINNIE BROWN had not so handsome a face as some little girls; yet people called her a beautiful child. Her beauty was not in her eyes, her cheeks, her chin, her nose, her forehead, or her hair. These were all well enough; her face was pretty enough in its way, but it was no prettier than the faces of many other girls whom no one ever thought to be very beautiful. Still, almost all

who knew Minnie spoke of her as a beautiful child. Why was this? What was there in Minnie to make people call her beautiful?

I will tell you. Minnie's mind was beautiful. She had a lovely spirit, a mild temper, and an obliging disposition. Minnie appeared to love every one. She was never angry, unkind, or rebellious. She almost always wore a pleasant smile on her rosy lips; a light of loving tenderness generally shone in her soft blue eyes. She always spoke in a gentle voice. Whoever looked upon her felt pleased at her appearance; and hence it was that she was called a beautiful child.

I do not mean to say that Minnie was faultless. There has never been but one faultless child in the world, and that was the sinless Child of Mary. But Minnie's faults were very few. Her natural disposition was very gentle, and she had learned to pray to Christ as her loving Savior and holy elder Brother. And thus, by studying to oppose all that was bad in her heart, by encouraging all that was good, and by expecting her Brother Savior in heaven to help her, she had become such a child as I have described.

But Minnie had many trials of her patience and goodness, like all other

children. These troubles, however, did not set her crying and fretting as some girls do, when vexatious trials annoy them. Her mother had taught her that trials were for her good. Minnie always remembered this lesson, because of the way in which it was taught to her. It was by means of a little tree, which Minnie's father set out in front of their cottage, one spring, with great care. Mr. Brown was a man of taste. He spared no pains to make his residence a pleasant one. He meant this tree to grow into a shade tree; and a beautiful little tree it was. It was tall, slender, smooth, and had very graceful branches. Minnie

admired it very much. She hoped it would live and become a great tree.

At first, it appeared as if it would do so The buds swelled, the leaves began to show their green edges, and Minnie was looking every day to see them burst into beauty. But the weather grew very cold, wet, and windy. For more than a week, the sun refused to shine. The sky was as dreary, and the air as cold, as rough November. Minnie often looked out of the window at the little tree in the storm; and when it swayed to and fro, she said to her mother, —

"I hope that little tree will live, mother."

"I hope so, too, my child," replied Mrs. Brown.

But when the fine weather and sunshine returned, the tree gave signs of drooping.

"I think it will die," said Mr. Brown, one day, after examining its appearance.

"I hope not," said Minnie.

But the tree did die, and in a few weeks was fit for nothing but to be cut down and burned.

"What made it die, mother?" inquired Minnie, one day, as she was watching the men who were digging it up.

"It was not vigorous enough to endure the late storm. Your father took it from the middle of the woods because

of its beauty. It had always been sheltered from the storm by other trees; and so it died when it was exposed without shelter."

"Would it have lived, if it had been grown on the *edge* of the woods, mother?"

"Probably it would. Had it always stood in the face of storms, it would have grown up hardier."

"Well, that's funny. I should never have thought of such a thing."

"Perhaps not," replied Mrs. Brown. "There are a vast many things you have yet to learn. In one respect you are like a young tree."

"Why, mother! How can I be like a

young tree?" asked Minnie, with an air of surprise.

"Well, you need storms to blow on you while you are young, that you may be able to endure trouble when you are older."

"Storms, mother! What storms?"

"I mean *trials*, Minnie. When you are ill used by a schoolmate, and are tempted to be revengeful, you are tried as the tree is tried by a storm. If you remain patient and loving under the trial, you are benefited by it, and will be more likely to endure the next trial you meet. Thus all your little storms, or trials, will be for your good."

"What, always?"

"Yes, Minnie, always, if you act right under them."

"Was it for my good to be pushed into the pond by Ralph Rattler, mother?"

"If it has led you to exercise a spirit of forgiveness towards Ralph, it has done you good."

Minnie paused a moment, as if in deep thought. She was asking herself if she had really forgiven Ralph for pushing her into the pond at the risk of her life. She thought she had. A gush of feeling poured up from her heart. Her eyes filled with tears, and, looking lovingly into her mother's face, she said, —

"I do think, mother, that I have forgiven Ralph."

"That is right, my dear Minnie. And having done so, you are better prepared to suffer wrong patiently than you were before."

"But, mother," added Minnie, "I don't think I love Ralph quite so well as I do Arthur, who saved my life. Is that right?"

"I suppose you cannot help the preference you feel for Arthur, my child. He is a good boy. Ralph is not. Arthur loves his mother, and is the best boy in the village. Ralph is disobedient, proud, and unlovely. But while you thus pre-

fer Arthur because of his better qualities, you must feel nothing but kindness and pity for wicked Ralph, and a desire to benefit him."

"That is just as I do feel, mother. But what's that?"

"I think I heard the door bell ring. Run and see, Minnie."

Minnie stepped quickly to the door. A little girl, named Lillia, stood on the threshold.

"How do you do, Lillia!" said Minnie.

"I am very well, Minnie. I want you to come down to my house and play a while. Mother's gone out, and I am all alone."

"I'll ask my mother," replied Minnie. "Wait a moment."

Minnie returned to the parlor, and said to her mother, "Lillia Leet is at the door. She wants me to play with her at her house a little while, because her mother is out. May I go, mother?"

"Do you wish to go, Minnie?"

"I am not very particular, mother. Only Lillia is alone, and perhaps she will feel bad if I refuse."

"You may go, then. Only be sure and return to tea."

"Yes, mother, I'll be at home by tea time."

Now, Minnie had been taught to be

neat and careful. So she did not leave her things in disorder because she was going out, or because Lillia was waiting for her. But she took the book she had been reading, and placed it carefully away in the bookcase. Then she put her needlework into the work basket, and carried it into the closet. After which, she took down her bonnet and shawl, and joined her playmate at the door.

Lillia had grown impatient at this little delay. She was not a very amiable girl, and did not try to control herself.

"Come, Minnie," said she, a little

pettishly; "I thought you would be all day getting ready."

"O," replied Minnie, gently, "I had to put my book and work away."

"Well, come, let us make haste, now. I've got a new swing at my house."

"A new swing! Where is it fixed, Lillia?" said Minnie.

"Out in the garden, under the arbor."

"O, that is a beautiful place, it will be so nicely shaded by the grape vine."

The two girls soon arrived at the summer house. Lillia took hold of the swing, and showing the large new rope to Minnie, said, —

"Don't you think this is nice, Minnie? See how strong it is. There is no fear of its breaking down, as your old thing did last summer."

"Yes, it is a beautiful swing, indeed, Lillia. You will have a nice time with it; and ——"

"Swing me," said Lillia, interrupting Minnie. She had placed herself in the seat of the swing, and was pushing herself to and fro.

Minnie obeyed her wish, and pushed the swing with right good will, until Lillia was able to touch the top of the arbor with the tips of her toes. Then she cried out, —

"Push away, Minnie! It swings nicely, don't it?"

"Yes, it's a capital swing," replied Minnie, who was almost out of breath through her labor in swinging her companion.

But Lillia kept swinging on, laughing and chatting in great glee, without once offering to give Minnie a chance to enjoy it; but whenever she failed to swing her briskly, cried out, —

"Push away, Minnie! It is capital fun!"

Minnie bore this selfish treatment a long time. But finding herself very tired, and seeing that Lillia showed no

disposition to relieve her, she stopped, and began to tie on her bonnet, and to place her shawl on her shoulders.

"Where are you going, Minnie?" asked Lillia.

"I am going home," replied Minnie.

"Well, that's real hateful in you," answered the selfish Lillia. She did not seem to see that the ugliness was in her own conduct, and not in Minnie's. She had really abused her gentle companion, who had borne her selfish conduct without a word of complaint. But Minnie now thought it was time to bear this treatment no longer. So the only reply she made to Lillia's reproachful speech was to say, —

"Good by, Lillia."

And she tripped along the garden, out at the gate, and up the street, saying to herself, "I must love Lillia, if she is selfish. I hope I shall never treat others as she has treated me."

Not long after this little incident, Minnie's father was seen with a ladder, busily employed among the branches of a grand old oak tree, which stood on the greensward in the rear of his house. While thus employed, Minnie came home from school. Seeing her father in the tree, she ran into the yard, and asked, —

"Pa, please tell me what you are doing."

"What do you think I am doing, Minnie?"

"I don't know, pa; but this coil of rope makes me think you are fixing me a swing."

"Well, suppose I am; what then?"

"O, then I shall be very happy, for I want a swing very much."

"Well, that is what I am doing, Minnie. In half an hour you will have as good a swing as you can desire."

"Thank you, dear pa. I shall love you better than ever, and I shall be so happy to have a swing."

And then Minnie jumped round upon the grass, and hummed a pretty little

song. She was so pleased she hardly knew how to express her joy. So she carolled it forth like the birds, in a sweet and simple song. After some minutes spent in singing and watching her father, she said, —

"Pa!"

"What do you want; Minnie?"

"May I go and invite Fanny, and Rhoda, and Jeannie to try my new swing when it is done?"

"Certainly, my child. Run and get them. The swing will soon be ready."

Minnie ran off in search of her playmates. She did not invite Lillia. Not because she bore any ill will towards

her, but because she knew her presence would only prevent the other girls from being happy. Selfish Lillia would want to swing all the time. In a short time she returned with her three friends. The swing was ready; and Minnie said, —

"Fanny shall swing first, because she is the youngest. Then Jeannie shall have a turn, and then Rhoda."

"But when will you swing yourself, Minnie?" inquired one of the girls.

"O, never mind me; I can swing any time, you know."

Then the girls began to swing, and Minnie was never happier than while

she was thus busied in affording her schoolmates pleasure.

This was a secret she had learned from her mother. And it is a very precious secret, which very few persons understand. Lillia did not understand it; for she always looked after her own

pleasure alone. Yet there was not a more unhappy child in that village than Lillia. But Minnie had found out that to make others happy was to be happy herself. You may feel sure, therefore, that this first trial of her swing was much more delightful to her than Lillia's was to her. Her three friends were highly gratified, and when they had all had a good swing, they exclaimed, —

"Now, Minnie, you must get in, and we will swing you."

Then Minnie jumped into the seat of the swing. Fanny and Jeannie stood in front of her, to push the swing backwards, and Rhoda stood behind on the

opposite side, to push her forwards. A right merry time she had, until it was necessary for them to part.

"You will come again soon, girls, won't you?" said she to her happy little friends.

"Yes, good Minnie, we will. You are so kind, you may be sure we will come again."

Then they all kissed her, and wished her good evening.

"Good evening, girls," she replied; and then she sprang, agile as a fawn and fresh as a fairy, into the house.

Minnie was not one of those children who have two sides to their character.

Some boys and girls are like the statue of a noble personage, which was brass on one side and iron on the other. When from home, they appear mild, gentle, obliging; but when with their parents, they are fretful, peevish, and disobedient. Minnie was the same gentle, obedient little being at home as she was abroad. But even there she had her little trials.

She was very fond of reading. No little girl read a good story with a greater relish than Minnie. And, like all other children, she did not love to be disturbed in the midst of an interesting book. But she had found that this

disposition needed to be brought under control, or it would lead her astray.

A pretty story is easier to read than a dry lesson. Many little girls neglect the lesson for the story, because the latter is the easiest. Minnie often felt tempted to do this. One evening, just as she sat down to get her lessons for the next day, her father brought in her favorite magazine. She was greatly interested in certain parts of it, and had been looking for it anxiously several days. When her father laid it on the table, he said, —

"Here is a new number of your magazine, Minnie."

"O, I am so glad, pa! Do let me see it!"

Mr. Brown gave it to her. She carefully cut its leaves, and was soon busy in looking at its pictures, stories, and puzzles. Her lessons were entirely put out of mind, and the poor spelling book and geography looked quite forsaken, as they lay pushed aside on the table.

Her good mother silently watched Minnie. She knew it was too late for her to read the magazine, and to get her lessons besides. She also knew that Minnie *ought* to get the lessons. Yet she felt loath to try her, by bidding

her lay the magazine aside. Hence she waited to see what Minnie would do.

Minnie had got fairly and fully interested in the charming little magazine. A half hour had passed since her father gave it to her, and still she was poring over its pages. It was plain that she had forgotten the lessons entirely.

"Minnie!" said her mother.

"Yes, ma!" replied the little girl, without taking her eyes from the book.

"Minnie, my child! Are your lessons learned?"

"No, mamma!"

"Had you not better study them, Minnie, and leave the magazine until to-morrow?"

"Can't I finish this story first, mother?" asked she, while a slight cloud of impatience gathered on her brow.

"Does my Minnie think it *right* to neglect her lesson for the magazine?" asked her mother, gravely.

"No, mother, it is not," replied the child, roused by this appeal to her sense of right.

"Then what will you do, Minnie?"

"Study my lesson, mother," said she, firmly, as she resolutely closed the magazine, and handed it to her mother, adding, "Please, mother, keep it until to-morrow. It is so interesting, I am afraid I shall read it if I keep it myself."

This was a noble act in a little girl. It was an act of self-conquest which very few children would have done so readily. I like her plan of giving the magazine to her mother. It was putting a means of temptation out of the way. It was easier for her to study the lessons with the magazine out of sight, than it would have been to keep it lying on the table. Thus did Minnie triumph over an indoor trial.

On another occasion, Minnie was very busy over her lessons, and she was very anxious to get them well. She had just begun a new study. It was difficult at first, and required all the attention

she could give to it. But Minnie was not one of those children who say, "I can't," to every hard lesson. She always said to every duty, "I'll try;" and she was trying with all her might, when her mother called to her, and said, —

"Minnie!"

"Yes, mother!"

"I want you, my child."

Now, some children whom I have seen, when thus disturbed, have looked very cross. Their eyes have flashed with angry fires, and they have been wont to use pert words, such as, "Can't you let me get my lesson?" "What do you want?" "I should think you

would like to have me study;" and similar wicked phrases.

But Minnie did not belong to this class of girls. It was not often her mother called her off from her studies. She was a sensible woman; she knew that a parent should not make needless trials for a child. But at this time she was doing something she could not very well leave. Hence she had called Minnie.

Minnie did not like to be called away from her lessons, and was for a moment inclined to feel angry. But a glance at her mother checked the wrong feeling, and she stepped up to her mother's side, who said to her, —

"Minnie, go into the bed room and see if baby is asleep. Take your cousin with you. He wants to look at the baby."

Minnie felt a little pang at her heart for the angry feeling which had tried to rise up against her mother. So she kissed her, and without saying a word took her cousin by the hand, and went into the bed room to look at her baby brother. Carefully stepping up to his little cot, she gazed upon his plump, happy face. His eyes were closed, and his lips moved, as if in his dreams he was talking with the angel watchers who guard an infant's bed. So Minnie

knew he was asleep, and returned with her report to her mother; after which

she resumed her studies, feeling very glad because she had gained another victory over a little trial of patience and temper.

But Minnie's trials were not all over. Children have their troubles all through childhood. Indeed, trouble is like an evil genius, who visits all parts of the world, peeps in at every house, sits at every table, and meddles with every body. You need not wonder, therefore, that Minnie, good and gentle though she was, had frequent trials.

This new trial was caused by Lillia. Fanny, Rhoda, and Jeannie had told that selfish girl about Minnie's swing, and the fine time they had enjoyed with her. Lillia was vexed because she was not invited too. She could not bear a slight. Her selfish heart always

felt galled at the least neglect from others. So, when Fanny and the other girls told her of Minnie's swing, she said, —

"How did you know that Minnie had a new swing?"

"Why, Minnie told us, to be sure, and invited us to a kind of swing party."

"Invited you, did she?"

"Yes, she came to our house, and asked us to go with her."

"The hateful creature! Why didn't she invite me? It was only the other day I took her into my father's arbor, and let her swing all the afternoon."

This was a wicked lie. A selfish

child, like Lillia, never regards the truth. She seeks only to gratify her evil passions, as Lillia did by this falsehood.

But the girls looked at her as if they doubted her word. It seemed so unlike Minnie to be ungrateful or neglectful of any one, they hardly knew what to make of it. At length Fanny remarked, —

"I never saw any thing hateful in Minnie."

"And I think Minnie is a very lovely girl," added Rhoda.

"So do I," exclaimed Jeannie. "And if she didn't ask you to her house after

swinging in your arbor, it was for some good reason, I know, Miss Lillia."

These words were like coals of fire in Lillia's heart. They really gave her great pain, and she looked fierce with anger; but keeping down some of her passion, she said, as calmly as she could speak, —

"You don't know Minnie as well as I do. She is deceitful."

"Minnie Brown deceitful! It can't be!" exclaimed Rhoda.

"Yes, she is one of those smooth sort of folks, who say one thing to your face and another behind your back," replied Lillia.

"I don't believe that," said Fanny.

"Nor I either," added Jeannie.

"No: I suppose not. You all think Minnie is a little saint, I dare say. But I could tell you something that would change your minds; only I won't do it," said Lillia.

"What is it?" asked all the girls, in a breath, their curiosity being fairly aroused.

"I shan't tell you. If I should, you wouldn't believe it."

"Yes we would. Come, Lillia, do tell us," said Fanny, in a coaxing voice.

"No I won't."

"She hasn't any thing to tell," observed Rhoda, tauntingly.

"Yes, I have something to tell, too, Miss Rhoda, and it's something about you."

"About me?"

"Yes, about you!"

"And is it about me, also?" asked Fanny.

"Yes."

"And me, too?" asked Jeannie.

"Yes, it's about you all."

"What can it be?" asked they again. Then, drawing closer to Lillia, they said, "Come, dear Lillia, do tell us."

"Well, since you are so anxious, I will tell you. Minnie said to me the other day, that she thought you, Miss

Fanny, was a very hateful thing; that Rhoda was a proud thing; and that Jeannie told lies."

The girls now looked at each other with blank surprise; and Fanny asked, —

"Did she say so, truly, Lillia?"

"She did, truly. She told me so down in the garden, the day that she was with me to try my new swing."

"Well, I declare!" exclaimed Fanny. "I should have never thought such a thing of Minnie!"

"Nor I," observed Rhoda.

"Nor I," added Jeannie; "and I won't speak to Minnie again."

Upon this, the girls all agreed to

treat Minnie with neglect; and having spent some time longer with Lillia, they parted, and returned to their several homes.

The purpose they had formed was a wrong one. They ought not to have believed so unlikely a story about Minnie. And if it was clear that Minnie had said what Lillia charged against her, they ought to have gone to her, and asked her to explain herself. Certainly it was wrong to treat her with contempt, without giving a reason.

It was not long before the innocent Minnie, tripping lightly along the street, met Fanny and Rhoda. As usual, she

ran towards them with a smile upon her pleasant face, and said, —

"How are you, girls? I am *so* glad to meet you!"

But the girls turned their faces the other way, and passed on without saying a single word in reply.

Poor Minnie! She was cut to the heart. What her two friends meant by such conduct, she could not imagine. So she burst into tears, and walked back to her home weeping.

On the way, she met Jeannie, who, seeing her in tears, did not pass her in silence, but stepping up to her, said, —

"What is the matter, Minnie?"

It was some time before Minnie could find voice enough to explain the cause of her tears. When she had done so, Jeannie told her all that Lillia had said.

"O," said Minnie, "it was cruel of Lillia to say so."

She then related all that had taken place at Lillia's on the afternoon of her visit to the swing in the arbor, and denied having ever said a word against either Lillia or any of the other girls. Jeannie, who was quick to perceive the state of things, was satisfied, and tenderly kissing Minnie, said, —

"Never mind, Minnie, I will go and find the girls, and tell them. I know

they will believe you. Don't cry, dear Minnie; I'll make it all right."

And then she ran off in search of the other girls. But Minnie hurried home to tell her sorrow to her mother. Mrs. Brown was out. Looking out at the window, Minnie saw her father seated under the old tree in the yard. She instantly ran out, and leaning her head on his shoulder, sobbed and wept violently.

"What is the matter, my child?" inquired Mr. Brown, in a voice soft with sympathy. Mr. Brown was very fond of his daughter, and was greatly moved to see her so deeply grieved.

But Minnie only sobbed the louder for some time. At last, she was able

to restrain her tears enough to tell him her troubles. He then soothed her young heart, and told her to remember the little tree and the storms; and that this was one of the trials which were to fit her to endure the storms of her future life; and he told her she must bear it bravely.

Minnie smiled through her tears. Her heart grew strong again as she thought of that little tree, and she said,—

"I will try, dear pa; but, O, it is hard to have such stories told about me, and to have the girls treat me so."

"Yes, Minnie, it is a very severe trial. But, if you bear it bravely, and ask

God to make you strong to suffer, and especially if you do not indulge any harsh feeling against Lillia, it will do you good in the end."

Just then some bright eyes were seen peeping through the railing of the yard. Jeannie had found the other girls, and all three of them had come to tell Minnie they did not believe Lillia. Fanny and Rhoda asked her to forgive them for not speaking to her, and promised not to believe ill of her any more.

Minnie's eyes grew bright now. The storm was over, and the sun shone in her heart as brightly as ever. Good, kind, gentle Minnie!

The summer, with its bright suns, birds, flowers, fruits, and pleasures, had passed swiftly away. Winter, with its snows, storms, and long evenings, had arrived, and Christmas, merry Christmas, was at hand. Minnie, her father and her mother, were seated in the parlor, around a bright wood fire, which blazed and crackled away in good old-fashioned style. Minnie was busied with a puzzling sum, knitting her little white brow, and pursing her pretty red lips, as she vainly tried to solve it. Her father, after watching her for some time, said to her, —

"Minnie!"

"Yes, pa!"

"I intend to let you have a Christmas tree this year."

"O, a Christmas tree! Dear, good pa, how I do love you!" said Minnie, as she threw down her pencil upon the slate; and, clapping her hands, she danced round the room for joy.

As Christmas was nigh, it was proper to talk over the proposed tree and the party who should be invited. "You may select as many of your schoolmates as you may choose," said her father, in reply to her question about the number of the party.

"O, thank you, pa. I will ask Fan-

ny, and Rhoda, and Jeannie, and Lillia, and Ettie, and ——

Here her father interrupted her, by asking, —

"Why do you think of asking Lillia, my child?"

"Because she has been my enemy, pa, and I want to make her love me, if I can."

"That's right, Minnie. Christ will love and bless you, if you always try to return enmity with kindness."

The list was now completed by the addition of several other names. Arthur Ellerslie was among the boys to be invited. And that night, I think,

Minnie had a dream. And the principal object in that dream was a Christmas tree, sparkling with lighted wax tapers, and loaded with choice presents for boys and girls.

The days were short and few between that evening and Christmas. But to Minnie old Time seemed to walk with leaden feet and slow steps. Yet they passed away as days always will, and Christmas night arrived at last.

There were great doings at Minnie Brown's that night. The sun had hardly set, before a bevy of boys and girls, Minnie's invited guests, began to arrive. Uncles and aunts, and bright-

eyed cousins, from the neighboring town, had arrived in the afternoon. And now the back parlor was pretty well filled; and such a good-natured buzzing, laughing, and chatting as were heard there, it would do your heart good to hear again; for the voices sounded like music—the music of happy hearts.

Mr. Brown was something of a wag, in his way. He was, withal, a man who did not think it beneath him to mingle with children on proper occasions, and to minister to their joy. So it pleased him, on this pleasant evening, to play the part of "Old Father Christmas."

Dressed in old-fashioned costume, with a yule log on his shoulders, a wreath about his head, and a right jovial twinkling in his eyes, he introduced himself to the company with many smart sayings, which added not a little to their amusement.

After a time, the folding doors were thrown open, revealing a splendid Christmas tree in the front parlor. It reached to the ceiling. Lighted wax tapers burned on almost every branch. Between these tapers hung a large number of gifts for the various members of the happy company.

This display called forth fresh bursts

of pleasure from the young people. When their cries of "O, dear!" "How beautiful!" "Splendid!" "What a magnificent tree!" "How grand!" &c., had ceased, "Old Father Christmas" invited them to step forward and receive the various gifts of love and friendship the tree contained.

Among all the gifts on that tree, there was none so beautiful as that which fell to the share of Minnie. It was a rich rosewood box, containing various articles, such as delicate little scent and cologne bottles, scissors, &c. Inside of the lid there was a looking-glass; and on the top of the lid, outside, a pretty little silver plate, on

which was very neatly engraved the name of MINNIE BROWN.

This choice box was handed round among the company with great care. But it happened that it was a long time getting to that part of the room where Lillia stood. She was very impatient to look at it. When it came near to her, she tried to snatch it out of the hand of a little girl, who was passing it to Fanny. Her effort was a rough one. She struck the box with her hand, and down it went upon the floor, smashing the bottles and breaking the looking glass in its fall.

"O Lillia, see what you've done!" exclaimed Fanny.

"How could you do so, Lillia?" said several voices at once.

"Poor Minnie! I'm sorry her box is broken," observed a good-natured aunt.

These and similar remarks passed from lip to lip after this accident. As for Lillia, she was ashamed and frightened at what she had done; and she stood gazing on the wreck of Minnie's box, pale and tearful.

Minnie was grieved. A tear swam in her eye at first; but she remembered the little tree, and restrained herself. She saw how bad Lillia felt, and thought she would not add to her grief by seeming to feel too much herself. So, taking the box, she said, in a cheerful voice,—

"Never mind! The box is not broken; only the bottles and the glass. Pa will get some new ones to fit it, and it will be as good as before. Never mind! Lillia did not mean to do it."

That night, when the party broke up, Minnie kissed Lillia, and whispered in her ear, —

"Don't feel bad, Lillia! You didn't mean to break my bottles, and I shall love you just the same as ever."

It was by such acts as these that Minnie made herself beloved. Her character grew more and more beautiful, and she was known, all over the village, as MINNIE, THE GENTLE GIRL.

Frances
Frances Edmunds Shop
Hartford ~ 1927